Linguistic Scaffolds for Writing Language Objectives

Effectively written language objectives:

• Are linked to standards-based content objectives
• Use active verbs to explain a specific student task
• Specify target language necessary to complete the task
• Emphasize development of expressive language skills: speaking and writing

Sample language objectives:

Students will articulate main idea and details using target vocabulary: main idea, detail. Students will describe a character's emotions using precise adjectives. Students will revise a persuasive paragraph using correct present and conditional verbs. Students will report a group consensus using citation verbs: determined, concluded.

Language Objective Frame:

Students will (active verb phrase) ______ using _____ (language target).

Active Verb Bank for Expressive Language Tasks

| articulate | defend | express | narrate | share |
| ask | define | identify | predict | state |
| compose | describe | justify | react to | summarize |
| compare | discuss | label | read | rephrase |
| contrast | elaborate | list | recite | revise |
| debate | explain | name | respond | write |

Language objectives are most effectively communicated with verb phrases such as the following:

Students will point out similarities between.. Students will express agreement… Students will articulate events in sequence… Students will state opinions about….

Sample Noun Phrases Specifying Language Targets

| academic vocabulary | complete sentences | subject verb agreement |
| target vocabulary | complex sentences | personal pronouns |
| precise adjectives | questions | past-tense verbs |
| strong verbs | clarifying questions | gerunds (verb + ing) |
| noun phrases | prepositional phrases | adjective clauses |

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Sample Expressive Language Objectives

**Related to Reading Standards:**
Students will…
- make predictions using future tense, and text feature vocabulary (e.g. headings, captions).
- formulate pre-reading questions using appropriate question structure.
- articulate main idea and details using key vocabulary: main idea, detail.
- prioritize arguments in a text using target adjectives: essential, significant.
- identify bias in a text by identifying adjectives and opinions.
- articulate cause and effect relationships within a thinking map using subordinating conjunctions: since, because, when.
- describe a character’s emotions using precise adjectives.
- retell a narrative story using past tense verbs and adverbs of time (e.g. first, the next day, later that week, afterward).
- ask and answer how questions about main events using the past-tense.

**Related to Writing Standards:**
Students will…
- express an opinion in a topic sentence for a persuasive paragraph using strong verbs.
- write a persuasive paragraph using correct present and conditional verb tenses.
- justify a position using relevant details and complete sentences.
- write a personal narrative using regular and irregular past-tense verbs.
- summarize a non-fiction text using general present tense and citation verbs.
- revise sentence fragments into complex sentences.
- write present tense sentences about a classmate using correct pronouns and subject verb agreement.

**Related to Classroom Discussion:**
Students will…
- restate a partner’s response using paraphrasing expressions (e.g. so what you are saying is, if I understand you correctly).
- point out similarities in a discussion using target language: similar to, builds upon.
- report a group consensus using past-tense citation verbs: determined, concluded.
- define the unit concept stereotype using complete sentences and target vocabulary.